

HOUSE BILL 427
By Bunch

AN ACT to create a pilot project for guardian ad litem services in the Tenth (10th) Judicial District. This act appropriates a sum certain to implement the provisions of this act in fiscal year 2001-2002.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a pilot project in the Tenth Judicial District, which consists of Bradley, Polk, McMinn and Monroe counties, to provide the services of guardians ad litem, to abused, neglected or dependent juveniles.

SECTION 2. The purpose of this pilot is to provide the services of guardians ad litem to abused, neglected or dependent children involved in judicial proceedings and to assure that participants are trained to perform their responsibilities.

SECTION 3. There is hereby appropriated the sum of ninety-nine thousand dollars (\$99,000) to fund the pilot project created by this act in fiscal year 2001-2002.

SECTION 4. The administrative office of the courts is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act. All such rules shall be promulgated in accordance with the provisions of Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 5. The administrative office of the courts shall, in cooperation with the senior judge in the Tenth Judicial District and in coordination with the judge designated in the Tenth Judicial District and the Bradley County Juvenile Court judge, implement and administer the program required by this act. In each county, the program shall consist of volunteer guardians

ad litem. In addition, there shall be a program attorney and a program coordinator who shall both serve all four (4) counties, as well as clerical staff as required, each of whom shall be paid full-time state employees.

SECTION 6. The administrative office of the courts shall appoint a guardian ad litem advisory committee consisting of at least five (5) members, four (4) of whom shall reside in the Tenth Judicial District, to advise the senior judge in matters related to this pilot program.

SECTION 7. If a conflict of interest prevents a local program in any of the pilot counties from providing representation, the court may appoint a member of the local county bar to represent the juvenile's interest.

SECTION 8. The administrative office of the courts shall monitor this pilot program and report to the general assembly regarding persons served, volunteer participants and types of cases involved and shall assess the impact of the program. Such report shall be provided no later than October 1, 2002.

SECTION 9. Any volunteer participating in a judicial program pursuant to the program created by this act shall be presumed to be acting in good faith and shall therefore be immune from civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed for such action.

SECTION 10. The pilot project created by this act shall cease on July 1, 2003.

SECTION 11. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.